

I remind the House that, during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln built the railroad system. How could you do that during a time when the country is split apart, and in this House, we can't figure out a way to get a highway surface transportation bill passed?

I looked up the latest figures—actually, 2015—on how our country ranks today. We ought to compare that to what Lincoln did, now going on 150 years ago, and what Eisenhower did 50 years ago.

We now rank 25th in the world for infrastructure quality. We are behind every last one of our allies, and now, we see some developing countries creeping forward. We better watch out for China. They are not in the top 30 now, but they are going to get there soon.

I remind this House that the way in which this country became the heavyweight that it is in the world was through the development of its infrastructure. We had to somehow create a seamless infrastructure that would go from across the continental United States, from east to west and from north to south.

With that, everything else became possible. Without that, we are simply going to be overtaken by nations that are far behind us now but, as I indicated are getting caught up.

I wanted to say a word about at least one other section of the GROW AMERICA Act because it relates to transit systems which are under special strain and which, interestingly enough, are embraced by people, from big cities to the smallest towns.

When I say “transit systems,” I am talking about everything from light rail and street cars that we have here in a big city like the Nation's Capital to rapid transit and buses that rural America depends upon and that are simply breaking down and unable to handle the traffic.

There is a very special provision of \$115 billion to invest in these transit systems. The reason that this investment would be so acceptable is that there is no part of America that it does not touch.

I am not talking about, for example, subway systems of the kind we have in the District of Columbia and New York. I am talking about light rail and street cars and buses and rapid transit buses that small-town America uses and depends upon, and that is in the GROW AMERICA Act.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the Democrats on the Transportation and Infrastructure committee are having a roundtable where each member is going to discuss a project that is stuck because we have not passed a surface transportation bill. What we are trying to do at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow is put a face on what infrastructure means.

What infrastructure means, for example, in the District of Columbia, is the H Street or Hopscotch Bridge. I didn't take on one of the bridges that is simply falling down. There are alto-

gether 31 projects in the District of Columbia that are awaiting funding. I have asked that the projects be put into the RECORD. Some of you would be interested if you were from the District, but it doesn't matter. You all have projects like this in your districts.

Unless we raise the ante, unless we make this an offer that this House cannot refuse, we are going to keep patching this bill until there is nothing left to patch.

This is a House that does not move, even in a crisis. We saw that with the Department of Homeland Security appropriation, that they simply would not give up. Finally, when the administration wouldn't change its immigration executive order, they simply had to let it pass. That is how we figured that one out.

Surely, there is a more rational way to figure out a surface transportation bill. I am working—at least on my side of the aisle—with 1-minute this week, with the Special Order hour Mr. GARAMENDI has taken out, with social media, and with our work with the many organizations who have come here because this is National Highway and Transportation Week, as they have so declared. We are trying our best.

In this case, we are not trying to reach a compromise. We are simply trying to get to a bill so that we can simply sit down and talk about it. If you don't want to talk about the GROW AMERICA bill, put your own version of a bill, but don't insult the American people by giving us nothing except another patch.

I appreciate that, at least on my own committee, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, there is an earnest effort to find a solution to this crisis. I commend Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for working together in search of a solution. I call upon the Ways and Means Committee, through whom the funds must come, to do their job.

Together, we can do this. We are not going to let this House rest; we are not going to drop this issue, even on May 31, when the funds are set to run out and we have to find a patch. We are going to keep coming to this floor so that the American people know that there are at least some Members of this House who are struggling to get a surface transportation bill, are earnest about it, and won't give up.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2100

CONSTRUCTION OF THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity

to talk for a little while tonight about some challenges that we are facing as a nation.

Mr. Speaker, I have never run for office before, and I will tell you I never had intentions of running for office. After sitting home watching from my home State of Louisiana, watching what is happening in Washington, and watching the dysfunction in this Nation, I think that the major motivation for running for office was more out of frustration than anything else—the disparity, the inconsistency in policies, decisions being made that lack, I think, the public interest and are being made more so as a result of political decisions.

Unfortunately, what I am going to talk about tonight I don't think will be the only subject that I end up coming back and talking about over the next several months.

It seems that, oftentimes, the Federal Government's decisions, their policies, their regulations seem to lack any type of connectivity to what is actually happening on the ground—decisions being made in a vacuum, decisions lacking, I think, the true expertise. What I am going to talk about tonight is an example of that.

This picture right here is a picture or the result of bad Federal policy. Now, the administration would lead you to believe that this picture is what is going to happen by building the Keystone pipeline.

This is oil, Mr. Speaker. This is oil in all of these bags that was recently picked up, but the administration would make you think that this is what is going to result from constructing, from building the Keystone pipeline.

The irony is that these bags don't have anything to do with the Keystone pipeline. This was actually oil that was picked up just in the last few months from an oil spill that happened in the Gulf of Mexico, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill 5 years ago—5 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

This administration has been asked over and over and over again by the State of Louisiana and by the coastal parishes in our State to force the responsible parties to go clean up the oil, and it is not happening. It hasn't happened. They haven't been held accountable.

It is unbelievable to me that we have an administration out there talking about their opposition to the Keystone pipeline because they are concerned about the environmental consequences at the exact same time—and over the last 5 years—allowing this to continue. It is hypocrisy. It is absurd, and it is obviously not in the public interest, Mr. Speaker.

The only reason that the White House, the only reason that the State Department is involved in any decisionmaking whatsoever in the Keystone pipeline is a result of the fact that the pipeline actually crosses the border between Canada and the United

States. That is the one thing that actually introduces the Federal Government into this decision.

For the most part, pipelines can be permitted and built by States, with State approval. They don't need interaction or approval from the Federal Government.

Now, by not building the Keystone pipeline or not approving it, many folks in the administration would lead you to believe that that is actually going to benefit the environment, that it will result in less oil consumption, that it will result in less greenhouse gases being released into the environment, into the atmosphere. The reality is that that is not accurate at all.

The reality is that, first of all, if you don't build the Keystone pipeline, you are still going to transport that oil. The Canadians will still be producing that oil, but what is going to happen is they will use other modes of transportation. They will use things like barges. They will use things like rail.

I think it is noteworthy to look at the statistics, to look at the historic performance of these other modes of transportation, which clearly indicate that transporting by pipeline is actually the safest means, the safest mode of transportation to get this product into the United States.

It is safest in regard to different incidents. It is safest in regard to spills, impacts on individuals, on communities, on the economy, on the environment. The safest way to transport is doing it by pipeline.

I mentioned that the oil will still be transported. Here is an example of what happens when you transport through other modes, when you don't transport by pipeline. This is an example of what happens.

As a result, you have had additional oil being transported by rail lines. Look at the extraordinary spike. Look at the extraordinary spike in the spills and the impacts to the environment as a result of transitioning to that mode of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, we have all seen in the news the various accidents that have happened all over the Nation as a result of this flawed policy of refusing to allow for this pipeline to proceed.

The State of Louisiana is a logistics—it is an intermodal hub. We have five of the top 15 ports in the United States. We have enough pipelines in our offshore region that they would go around the Equator if you put them end on end.

We have an extraordinary network of pipelines, demonstrated right here. You can see this high concentration of pipelines that are all over our State and in the adjacent State of Texas and in all 48 States in this graphic here very, very clearly.

I will say it again. The only reason the administration is involved in the Keystone pipeline decision is because that pipeline crosses the U.S. Canadian border. It is the sole reason.

All of these pipeline networks in here probably did not include Federal ap-

proval in regard to crossing over international borders. Take a look at this, Mr. Speaker. Take a look at, as I recall, 1.5 million miles of pipelines across the country.

The reality is that major components of the Keystone pipeline are actually already built or can be built without the approval of the Federal Government. That 1-foot section crossing over our Canadian border on the north is the only reason, again, that the administration is involved in this.

The fact remains, number one, by building the Keystone pipeline, it will not result in additional greenhouse gases being released. The Canadians are going to continue to produce the oil. The oil will be sent either through other modes of transportation in the United States, or it will be sent to other countries.

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, the Clean Air Act regimes of these other nations, in most cases, is not as stringent or as strict as it is in the United States, so resulting in a net increase in the greenhouse gases that this administration is so concerned about.

I will say it again. By not approving this pipeline, you are going to force the oil onto barges, onto trucks, onto rail, or other less safe means of transportation.

I certainly have nothing against those other modes of transportation. They are all critically important, but to see this administration hide behind the oil spill or the suggested oil spill impacts of the pipeline is simply absurd. Facts prove otherwise.

As you see here, the majority of this pipeline, by far, can be built without the Federal Government's approval. It is simply nonsensical. It is nonsensical to watch this administration hide behind false excuses to drag this decision out for years, whenever it is contrary to our economy.

What is going to happen if we don't build this pipeline? In addition to using other means of transportation, we will be importing oil, not from the North American continent, but from other countries like Venezuela, like Nigeria and Middle Eastern nations that make up the top 10 nations that export oil to the United States.

In many cases, Mr. Speaker, I will say again, Venezuela, countries that don't share American values; yet we are exporting hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands and thousands of jobs to other countries.

Who is running this place?

Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan bill that was going to allow for the pipeline to be approved, for us to put this behind us and move towards other things, towards higher priority things that actually should have the attention of the United States Congress and the White House, as opposed to these things, decisions that should have been made years ago, and we should have passed on from there.

As a result of these ridiculous decisions, all these tortured reports, all the

involvement of various agencies—including the EPA, the State Department, and other agencies—we are continuing to go through this long process, dragging this out, resulting again in less safe means of transportation.

Whether it is coming in through ships from other countries, across the Atlantic Ocean, or it is coming in on rail lines, it is coming in tugs and barges on our waterways, it is being transported to the United States, through less safe means of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, in closing, that this is what happens when you have bad Federal policy, when you are making bad Federal decisions. This is what happens.

You result in thousands of pounds of oil, in miles and miles of shoreline, tens of miles of shoreline, still oil in our home State of Louisiana, as a result of bad Federal policy.

We are watching a similar bad Federal policy unroll right now as the administration continues to invent impediments to what makes sense, to what statistically makes the most sense—by approving a pipeline and getting out of the way—and obstructing our economy development, jobs for Americans, and North American energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2215

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS) at 10 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1735, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 36, PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2048, USA FREEDOM ACT OF 2015; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Ms. FOXX from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-111) on the resolution (H. Res. 255) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel